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COMPREHENSIVE REVIEW OF THE WHOLE
QUESTION OF PEACE-KEEPING
OPERATIONS IN ALL THEIR ASPECTS

SECURITY COUNCIL
Forty-ninth year

Letter dated 29 March 1994 from the Permanent Representative of the Russian Federation to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to transmit the text of a joint statement made by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Ministry of Defence of the Russian Federation on 29 March 1994.

I should be grateful if you would have the text of this letter and its annex circulated as a document of the General Assembly, under item 81 of the preliminary list, and of the Security Council.

(Signed) Y. VORONTSOV

* A/49/50.

ANNEX

Joint statement of 29 March 1994 by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Ministry of Defence of the Russian Federation

Recently, ideas have been appearing in statements by foreign politicians and in foreign media publications, as well as in the course of discussions in international forums, about the "equivocal nature" of the Russian Federation's peace-keeping mission in the territory of a number of countries forming part of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS). Statements about the Russian Federation's "neo-imperial ambitions" are becoming increasingly common. Whatever form these reproaches take, their essence is invariably reduced to one thing: the Russian Federation, under the pretext of peacemaking activity - and virtually bypassing the universally accepted norms of international law - is allegedly stepping up the pressure on its neighbours and demanding for itself the right to "interfere" in their internal affairs. This involves not only arbitrary interpretation of the facts, but also their voluntary or involuntary distortion.

The main argument advanced by the proponents of this view of Russian peacemaking in neighbouring States is the idea of what is termed the "unilateral" dispatch of troops by the Russian Federation to unstable regions. The conclusion to be drawn from this premise is that the world community's involvement in peacemaking efforts to resolve conflicts in the territory of the former USSR must entail controlling the actions of the Russian Federation.

We do not wish to exaggerate the significance of this attitude in certain political and social circles in both the West and the East. The leaders of the majority of countries are exhibiting a responsible and sober approach which acknowledges the real and positive role of the Russian Federation in containing and resolving crisis situations. The Russian Federation would like a stronger and genuine partnership based on equality and on mutual trust and respect to be established in real terms, not just at the level of declarations or intentions, in the sphere of peacemaking in the CIS countries.

To this end, we deem it appropriate to draw attention to a number of fundamental political and international legal aspects of the Russian Federation's participation in peacemaking activity within CIS.

The Russian Federation's actions are aimed solely at halting armed confrontations in a number of newly independent States, stabilizing the situation there and creating conditions for a long-term and lasting settlement. We are proud of the fact that thanks to the presence of Russian peacemaking forces in "hot spots", far greater losses among the civilian population have been prevented.

Our efforts are being deployed against the background of the dramatically complex economic and financial situation in the Russian Federation itself, and involve the diversion of considerable resources to peacemaking purposes: in the last 10 months alone, expenditures in this respect (making allowance for the complexity of accurate calculations and the inadequate equipment of our

peacemakers as compared with the United Nations "Blue Helmets") have amounted to around 26 billion roubles. More than 15,000 Russian military personnel are stationed at "hot spots" in the territory of CIS States.

Peacemaking in the CIS countries is not an "independent Russian activity". In every case, without exception, our activities are conducted at the request and with the consent of the States concerned and the parties to the conflict. The peacemaking contingents are deployed on the basis of bilateral and multilateral agreements which are in conformity with the rules of international law. This is fully consistent with the provisions of the United Nations Charter, pursuant to which dealing with matters relating to the maintenance of peace on the basis of arrangements among interested States is not only permitted, but welcome (Article 52 of the Charter). The only exception is in the case of enforcement action, which pursuant to Article 53 of the Charter must be taken under the authority of the Security Council. However, none of the current peacemaking operations in the territory of the former USSR falls under this provision, in that they are not enforcement actions and are conducted with the consent of all parties to the conflict concerned. The United Nations and the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE) are kept regularly informed of the progress of all these operations.

The Russian Federation consistently advocates the broadest possible participation of the United Nations and CSCE in the settlement of conflicts in the CIS countries. However, no permission of any kind is required from the United Nations or CSCE for peacemaking operations involving the Russian Federation and its neighbours and conducted on the basis of the criteria set forth above. These operations are carried out on the basis of the sovereign rights of the States in question, as embodied in the Charter of the United Nations, and need no further legitimization. Another point is that cooperation with the United Nations and CSCE, and their active and objective support for the peacemaking efforts by the Russian Federation and its neighbours, could be of real assistance in securing more effective and rapid settlement of the conflicts. This indeed is what we advocate in proposing that the United Nations and CSCE cooperate with the peacemaking operations in the CIS countries in various ways, including the sending of missions, observers, advisers, etc. The Russian Federation will also be prepared to participate in peacemaking operations of the United Nations and CSCE in the territory of the former USSR, if the parties to a given conflict request these organizations to establish such operations and a decision to conduct them is taken.

It should also be noted that the delayed response to the numerous appeals by CIS countries to the United Nations and CSCE for support (particularly in relation to the conflicts in Abkhazia and Tajikistan) means that the agreements between the Russian Federation and its neighbours, along with the mechanisms established within the framework of CIS, remain the principal peacemaking instruments in the region. It is precisely through them that the problems of maintaining international peace and security here are now being resolved, and they constitute an inseparable part of the maintenance of world-wide stability. The world community must acknowledge this objective reality, and begin to cooperate more closely with the Russian Federation and its neighbours. This would moreover enable all "doubters" to convince themselves of the

"transparency" of these peacemaking operations and the lack of foundation for the suspicions that have arisen with respect to them.

The Russian Federation, in pursuing a firm policy of ensuring peace and stability around its borders and the discharge of its obligations under agreements with the countries concerned and within the framework of CIS, is not directing its efforts against anyone at all. We do not seek for ourselves a special status or an exclusive role, but nor shall we shrink from our responsibility for the situation in this key region for the Russian Federation. We are prepared to cooperate constructively on these issues with the United Nations, CSCE and the world community as a whole.